

## £3.3 million boost for next generation nuclear technology

- Government's nuclear ambitions backed with £3.3 million funding to support advanced nuclear technology
- projects across the UK will benefit, helping support research to develop a UK Advanced Modular Reactor (AMR)
- funding is a further boost for new homegrown nuclear to protect the UK's energy independence

Cutting-edge nuclear technology projects across the UK have today (Friday 2 September) received government backing to help develop the next generation of nuclear reactors. The funding will support the early-stage innovation for 6 winning projects, helping attract private investment and supporting the creation of new, highly-skilled green jobs.

This £3.3 million funding through the [Advanced Modular Reactor Research, Development and Demonstration \(AMR RD&D\) programme](#), will support the development of cutting-edge nuclear technology in the UK such as high temperature gas reactors (HTGRs), helping revolutionise the way the UK gets its energy.

The innovative projects being backed by the government include National Nuclear Laboratory Ltd in Cheshire, who are coordinating a UK-Japan team to design an innovative HTGR, and U-Battery Developments Ltd in Slough, for a study to determine the optimum size, type, cost, and delivery method for a U-Battery AMR suitable for demonstration in the UK.

The AMR funding represents another key step in the government's plans to accelerate homegrown nuclear power to strengthen the [UK's energy security](#).

Energy Minister Greg Hands said:

This investment will help unlock the potential for new nuclear reactors in the UK, as we drive forward plans to boost clean, cutting-edge, homegrown technologies for our energy security, while driving down bills in the long term.

[£2.5 million in funding is going to 6 projects](#) seeking to develop Advanced Modular Reactors (AMRs) in the UK. These reactors use novel and innovative fuels, coolants, and technologies to generate high-temperature heat for industrial use, as well as electricity.

The AMR RD&D programme, part of the £385 million Advanced Nuclear Fund, focuses on developing high temperature gas reactors (HTGRs), with an ambition for a demonstrator by the early 2030s, as they optimise opportunities for decarbonising industrial heat to support the UK's target of reaching net zero

by 2050.

AMR technology could be a cost-effective solution for decarbonising industry, typically having higher temperature outputs than conventional reactors. The low carbon, high temperature heat from AMRs could be used for hydrogen production, process heat for industrial and domestic use, as well as electricity generation.

In addition, the government is providing up to £830,000 to the Office for Nuclear Regulation and the Environment Agency to develop their capability and consider innovative regulatory approaches to high temperature gas reactors (HTGRs). This will help support the government's plans to have a UK-based HTGR demonstration by the early 2030s. BEIS will work with the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority and their wider estate to explore how to leverage their knowledge, sites and operational experience to inform the development, deployment and operation of the demonstration and to support BEIS policy objectives in this area.

## **The winners announced today**

- U-Battery Developments Ltd in Slough is receiving £499,845 for a study to determine the optimum size, type, cost, and delivery method for an U-Battery AMR suitable for demonstration in the UK
- EDF Energy Nuclear Generation Ltd in Gloucester and Hartlepool is receiving £499,737 focusing on end-user requirements to determine the reactor design characteristics most suitable for a HTGR demonstration in the 2030s. EDF proposes the Hartlepool Heat Hub as a host site for the UK's first HTGR demonstration
- Ultra Safe Nuclear Corporation UK Ltd in St Helens, Merseyside is receiving £498,312 for a project that will build on USNC's existing micro modular reactor (MMR) design as a foundation to develop and demonstrate a modified MMR+ design best suited to UK industry's current and projected future process heat demands. This includes a demonstration of hydrogen and sustainable aviation fuel (SAF) production
- National Nuclear Laboratory Ltd in Cheshire is receiving £497,495 for a project that coordinates a UK-Japan team (NNL, Japan Atomic Energy Agency (JAEA) and Jacobs) to leverage a proven HTGR baseline from Japan and adopt an innovative approach in its design, build, construction and operation
- Springfields Fuels Ltd in Salwick, Lancashire is receiving £243,311 for a project, in collaboration with Urenco Limited, to support the range of potential HTGR technologies which may come forward in the UK
- National Nuclear Laboratory Ltd in Cheshire is receiving £250,000 under the Lot 2 Phase A funding, for a project that aims to deliver a domestic commercial fuel supply starting with the first fuel load for the HTGR demonstration

## **Notes to editors**

Funding for this programme was split into 2 Lots:

- Lot 1 for projects developing advanced modular HTGR technologies, with up to £500,000 available for each project
  - Lot 2 for projects developing coated particle fuel (CPF) for HTGR technologies, with up to £250,000 available for each project
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## Permanent Secretary Matthew Rycroft visits Fiji

World news story

The UK's Home Office Permanent Secretary, Matthew Rycroft, was in Fiji on a two-day visit to affirm UK's long-term commitment to Fiji and the wider Pacific.



Attorney General Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum (left), United Kingdom Home Office Permanent Secretary, Matthew Rycroft

During the two-day visit, the Permanent Secretary met government officials and partners including the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, Attorney General and Minister for Economy, Justice, Civil Service, Communications, Housing and Community Development; The Hon. Inia Seruiratu, Minister for Defence, National Security, Policing, Rural and Maritime Development and Disaster Management and The Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum, Henry Puna.

PS Rycroft reiterated the UK's long-term commitment to Fiji and the wider Pacific and set out his desire to work closely with the Government on shared challenges including climate security and transnational crime. He:

- highlighted the UK's commitment at COP26 to provide a new £274million Climate Action for a Resilience Asia (CARA) programme to support the Pacific
- announced that the UK is providing £15 million for the Pacific region

through its Conflict, Stability and Security Fund (CSSF) programme, which works in partnership with Pacific Island Countries to strengthen law and justice, maritime security, reduce conflict and corruption and promote open and inclusive societies

- highlighted the Royal Navy Offshore Patrol Vessels forward-deployed in the region, HMS Spey and Tamar, supporting Fiji to tackle Illegal Fishing and other maritime threats, alongside diverse engagement including sport, conservation and women's empowerment

Mr Matthew Rycroft said:

I am pleased to be visiting Fiji and working to champion the issues which matter most to Pacific partners. We share history, values, and a determination to tackle global challenges. We have thousands of Fijian diaspora living in the UK, which is at the heart of the relationship between the two countries. It is these people-to-people ties that makes Fiji a particularly important partner for the UK.

British High Commissioner to Fiji, Dr Brian Jones, said:

On top of his National Security focus, PS Rycroft met USP students to discuss the growing Pacific impact of Russia's brutal invasion of Ukraine. He also met senior Fiji police officers about to head to the UK to study and train with Greater Manchester Constabulary. This further strengthens our cooperation preserving and protecting international peace and the rule of law.

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## [CMA clears NortonLifeLock / Avast merger](#)

NortonLifeLock and Avast both offer cyber safety software to consumers under a variety of different brands. Products include antivirus software (also known as endpoint security software), privacy software (such as VPNs) and identity protection software. The companies announced plans to merge in a £6 billion deal in August 2021.

In its initial Phase 1 investigation, the Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) concluded that the deal raised a realistic prospect of a substantial lessening of competition, and referred the merger for an in-depth Phase 2

investigation to consider those concerns in more detail in March 2022.

In a Phase 2 investigation, the legal standard to assess whether a deal raises competition concerns is higher, to reflect the more extensive investigation that takes place in a Phase 2 inquiry. When applying that more stringent test, the CMA provisionally concluded, in August 2022, that the deal does not substantially reduce competition in the UK and may not be expected to do so in the future. Following a consultation that ended on 24 August 2022, the CMA has upheld its provisional findings and cleared the deal.

The CMA's Phase 2 investigation has found that the supply of cyber safety software to consumers is rapidly evolving. Providers of paid-for and free services are continually developing and improving their products to meet different and changing customer needs.

While the CMA's Phase 1 decision raised concerns about the extent of competition that the merged business would face, a more detailed analysis of the deal has found that the merging businesses face significant competition. This comes from McAfee – their main rival – plus a range of other suppliers that currently have a smaller market position in the UK.

The CMA also found that security applications provided by Microsoft, which holds a unique position in the market as the owner of the Windows operating system, offer increasingly important alternatives for consumers.

In recent years, Microsoft has improved its built-in, bundled security application so that it now offers protection which is as good as many of the products offered by specialist suppliers. In addition, applications recently launched by Microsoft for its customers bring its cyber safety offering closer to those of the merging businesses and are likely to further strengthen Microsoft as a competitor going forward.

On this basis, the CMA considers that the merging businesses will continue to face sufficient competition after the deal completes and has concluded that the merger does not raise competition concerns.

Kirstin Baker, chair of the CMA inquiry group, said:

Millions of people across the UK rely on cyber safety services to keep them safe online.

Phase 2 investigations allow us to explore concerns identified in our initial review in more detail, as we gather further information from the companies involved and other industry players. After reviewing the evidence in an in-depth review, we are now satisfied that this deal won't worsen the options available to consumers. As such, we have concluded that the deal can go ahead.

For more information, visit the [NortonLifeLock / Avast merger inquiry page](#).

## Notes to editor:

1. For media enquiries, contact the CMA press office on 020 3738 6460 or [press@cma.gov.uk](mailto:press@cma.gov.uk).
2. A Phase 2 inquiry has a different statutory test to Phase 1. In its assessment of mergers at Phase 1, the CMA is required to assess whether the merger creates a 'realistic prospect' of a substantial lessening of competition (SLC). At Phase 2, the CMA applies a 'balance of probabilities' threshold. The realistic prospect threshold at Phase 1 is intentionally a lower and more cautious threshold for an SLC finding than that applied by the CMA after more extensive investigation at Phase 2.
3. The CMA ran a 3-week consultation on the provisional findings up to 24 August 2022, during which time anyone could make submissions to the CMA. The responses are published on the merger inquiry page.

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## [Susan Lapworth appointed as Office for Students Chief Executive](#)

Press release

Susan Lapworth has been appointed as Chief Executive of the Office for Students until the end of August 2026.



Susan Lapworth has been appointed as Chief Executive of the Office for Students (OfS) following an open appointment process conducted by the Department for Education.

Susan has served as OfS interim Chief Executive since May 2022, prior to

which she was its Director of Regulation, and has worked in the higher education sector for 19 years.

The Office for Students acts as the independent regulator for Higher Education in England. The Chief Executive is responsible for setting and delivering the strategic vision for how the OfS will achieve its aims of championing the interests of every student, whatever their background, and making sure that all students have a fulfilling higher education experience.

The appointment will take effect from 1 September 2022 until the end of August 2026.

Susan will work closely with the OfS board, Government and higher education stakeholders to deliver the OfS's regulatory priorities for the next four years.

Secretary of State for Education James Cleverly said:

As interim Chief Executive of the Office for Students, Susan has demonstrated her leadership skills and put students' interests first. She has extensive knowledge and experience of our world-class higher education sector, so I'm pleased to make this appointment.

I look forward to seeing her play a pivotal role in improving graduate outcomes and ensuring that all students receive the high-quality academic experience they deserve.

Chief Executive of the OfS Susan Lapworth said:

I am delighted to have been appointed as the OfS's chief executive. English universities and colleges make an enormous contribution to society and individuals, through teaching, research and work in their communities.

This complex and diverse sector would not have a regulator if its work was unimportant and I look forward to continuing to work with the excellent team at the OfS to ensure that students from all backgrounds can access and succeed on high quality courses which leave them well prepared for life after graduation.

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# New standards for rented homes under consideration

- A new Decent Homes Standard proposed for the private rented sector for the first time
- Consultation launched today to hear views from renters, landlords, councils and housing groups
- Part of government's new deal for renters to make sure homes are safe and secure

Millions of renters could benefit from a set of improved standards for rented homes, in the next step of the government's biggest shake up of the private rented sector in 30 years.

The Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities has today (2 September 2022) launched a [consultation on introducing a Decent Homes Standard to the rented sector](#), which would mean landlords are legally bound to make sure their property meets a reasonable standard.

The majority of landlords in the private rented sector already meet high standards but a minority are failing to meet these.

The consultation asks whether privately rented homes should be required to be kept in a good state of repair with efficient heating, suitable facilities, and free from serious hazards like major damp or fire risks. The consultation seeks views on whether such new standards should be introduced and on how they should be enforced.

Over a fifth of the 4.4 million privately rented homes in England are in poor condition. Today's move shows the government is getting on with delivering its levelling up mission, to halve the number of poor-quality rented homes by 2030.

## **Housing Secretary Greg Clark said:**

I want to see a thriving private rented sector, but that does not mean that tenants should have to suffer homes that are not of decent standard.

This consultation asks what the minimum standard for privately rented homes should be.

## **Alicia Kennedy, Director of Generation Rent said:**

We welcome these plans to extend the Decent Homes Standard to private rented homes.



As the private rented sector has grown to overtake the social sector in size, not enough action has been taken on the poorer conditions private tenants must put up with. Private rented homes are more costly to heat and at a higher risk of disrepair and damp problems. There is no reason why private tenants should expect a worse service than social tenants.

This crucial measure will help tenants get value for money, whoever they rent from, and stop landlords from profiting by cutting corners.

**Gavin Smart, Chief Executive at Chartered Institute of Housing said:**

All renters should be able to live in decent, well maintained homes. We welcome the commitment to introduce a new Decent Homes Standard to the private rented sector as part of the government's new deal for renters.

We look forward to seeing the details set out in the consultation and discussing the proposals with our members.

The social housing sector has been subject to a decent homes standard since 2001. Over the last decade poor quality social housing has reduced by over a third.

The introduction of a Decent Homes Standard in the private rented sector was outlined in the government's landmark [Fairer private rented sector white paper](#).

The consultation will run for 6 weeks and seeks views from tenants, landlords, and others in the sector.

Statistics taken from the [English Housing Survey 2020 to 2021: housing quality and condition](#).